

QUESTION OF CREMATION
by Willis E. Bishop

I don't know which side you expect me to take on that. In the Scripture, it seems that the general pattern is for (may I call it) a decent burial -- the burial of the body and caring for it. That was true throughout the Old Testament; it was true in connection with the body of Christ and of others in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament there were two reasons for burning the bodies. One was out of hatred and the other was for sanitation purposes, where they went into a city and dead bodies were decomposing.

Maybe the Scripture doesn't tell us all that we would like to know about it. Some people I know about want to be cremated in order to escape the Lord, especially those who are atheists. They think perhaps if they have their ashes scattered the Lord will not have anything to judge -- He can't find them. But they are missing the omnipotence of God. And there is no one who can ever defeat the purpose of God.

Q. What about "ashes to ashes and dust to dust"?

You don't find that in the Scripture. I don't criticize a pastor who says that, but it is a pagan practice. If a Christian wishes to be cremated, that is a decision he must make between himself and the Lord, and the Lord knows the circumstances. All I can say is what the pattern in the Scripture has been. For people who have been burned in fires, buried at sea and so on, there is no problem for the Lord.

Paul says in I Corinthians 15, you take a grain of wheat, put it into the ground and you pluck one in the following harvest. There is an organic connection. That is all the Lord needs to reconstitute that body of yours and mine, which will be like unto His glorious body.

* * * * *